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AUTHOR Robertson, Lorraine C.
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ABSTRACT

A study compared attitudes of remedial readers in a basal reading program with those of remedial readers in an individualized reading program. Ten first-grade children, five from each of the respective classrooms, were used. All were classified as low readers jointly by the classroom teacher and with the use of an informal reading inventory taken from the McGuffey Reading Center at the University of Virginia. Each of the children was interviewed using open-ended questions and with a survey published in the "Reading Teacher" in May of 1990. It was found that remedial readers in the individualized reading program had more positive attitudes toward recreational reading and academic reading than remedial readers in the basal reading program. Findings suggest that the characteristics, philosophy, and structure of the reading program affect the attitudes of remedial readers in the respective programs. (Two tables and one figure of data are included; 22 references, the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (from the "Reading Teacher"), the Garfield Attitude Measurement Scale, a self-ranking scale for teacher's perception of student as reader, and a list of four open-ended questions are attached. (RS)

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Attitudes of Remedial Readers in a Basal Reading Program Versus an Individualized Reading Program

Lorraine C. Robertson
Curry School of Education
University of Virginia

Running Head: ATTITUDES OF REMEDIAL READERS

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Abstract

Attitudes of remedial readers in a basal reading program versus an individualized reading program are compared. Ten first grade children, five from each of the respective classrooms, were used. All were classified as low readers jointly by the classroom teacher and with the use of an informal reading inventory taken from the McGuffey Reading Center at the University of Virginia. Each of the children were interviewed using open ended questions and with a survey published in The Reading Teacher in May of 1990. It was found that remedial readers in the individualized reading program had more positive attitudes toward recreational reading and academic reading than remedial readers in the basal reading program. It seems that the characteristics, philosophy, and structure of the reading program affect the attitudes of remedial readers in the respective programs.

Attitudes of Remedial Readers in a Basal Reading Program Versus an Individualized Reading Program

Educational research over the years has reported that if a child holds a high level of self-esteem or a positive self-image as a learner, then he or she is more likely to do better in school (Sartain, 1968; Marsh, 1984; Wirth, 1977; Hadley, 1988). Embedded in a child's self-image is his or her perception of themselves as a reader and his attitude toward reading. The correlation between attitude of reading and reading achievement has been proven as a valid relationship by many researchers (Burns, Roe, & Ross, 1982; Zimmerman & Allebrand, 1965; Cunningham, 1982). Donald Howard (1988) found that the way a child feels about reading is closely related to their level of success as a reader. Their attitude is crucial to the outcome of their work and attitudes are formed on the basis of a child's degree of success or lack of success. Logically, if a child has a positive attitude toward reading and perceives himself or herself as a good readers, he or she is more likely to be a successful reader, yet the reciprocal also holds true.

Children in lower reading groups have a less than positive attitude toward themselves and reading

(Howard, 1988; Morgan, 1989, cited in Berghoff & Egawa, 1991). Also reported by Karlen (cited in Zimmerman & Allebrand, 1965) unsuccessful readers lack social confidence and have a low motivation level toward school achievement. Therefore an important factor of reading success is a child's attitude toward reading.

The purpose of this study is to look at reading attitudes of two groups of first graders of low ability taken from two structurally very different classrooms. The reading programs in these classrooms are based on very different assumptions and philosophies. It is the goal of this study to discover if low first grade readers in two very different reading programs have different attitudes toward reading. Does the type of reading program selected effect reading attitudes of low achievers?

It is hypothesized that remedial readers in the individualized reading program will have a more positive attitude toward reading than remedial readers in the more traditional basal reading program. This hypothesis is supported by the following reasons. (1) Children in the individualized program will not be constantly comparing themselves to members of higher reading groups. (2) Never will a child be embarrassed

by his or her oral reading. (3) Children will only be compared to their previous work in an individualized classroom. (4) Children are self-selecting the material they are reading and will be more interested in it and more motivated to read it. (5) Each child will have a close working relationship with the teacher reinforced through the conferences which will promote higher self-esteem.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ability Grouping

Literature on grouping students by ability for reading instruction is plentiful yet complex, since the definition researchers use for ability grouping can overlap and become confusing. Over the years, educators have based general ability grouping on several assumptions founded by Oates (1985) and summarized by Dawson (1987): (1) Students learn better when grouped with students considered academically similar. (2) Low ability students will develop more positive self-images when not forced to compete with students of greater capability. (3) Teachers decisions for groups can be made on past performance and level of ability. (4) Teachers can better meet individual

differences in homogeneous groups. These four assumptions help us better understand the philosophy behind grouping students for reading instruction.

There are two major types of grouping. The first, ability grouping by class, is defined as children placed in homogeneous classrooms of similar academic ability for the purpose of instruction. While the second is ability grouping within class where children, placed in a heterogeneous class, are grouped for small instructional periods such as reading.

Grouping by Homogeneous Classes

Much of the research on ability grouping has been on ability-grouped classes. From that research, pertaining to children's attitudes the reports are fairly unanimous, concluding that there is not a significate difference in attitudes. Dawson (1987) summarizes the research and reports that "students self-concepts and attitudes toward themselves and school are not enhanced in ability-grouped classes". Examination of research compiled by Kulik in 1985 (cited in Dawson, 1987) found that of the 24 studies reviewed which examined self-concept measures, both children grouped in homogeneous and heterogeneous classes had identical self-esteem scores. From these

studies it appears that it does not matter whether a student is grouped in a homogeneous class or in a heterogeneous class, his self-esteem remains unchanged. Yet other studies with mixed conclusions, have invalidated this statement.

Three studies examined by Kulik's study in 1985 (cited in Dawson, 1987), where remedial learners were grouped together, reported positive effects on self-esteem. This seems to show that low readers gain more positive attitudes, seem to feel better about their reading, and themselves when grouped together. Yet this does not always hold true.

In a study conducted by Carleberg and Kavale in 1980 (cited in Dawson, 1987) on slow learners placed in segregated classrooms, the exact opposite was found. Instead of enjoying higher self-esteem they scored significantly lower on measures of social and personal items compared to remedial learners in the mainstream. Supported by Dawson (1987), class grouping can have profoundly negative effects for students in low ability classes. If students self-concepts and attitudes are <u>not</u> enhanced by grouping by class and low achievers are <u>very</u> negatively effected, what happens in a heterogeneous class where they are grouped within the

class? Are remedial readers enhanced by within-class grouping?

Grouping Within Heterogeneous Classes

From the literature on within-class grouping available to be analyzed, the majority of research indicates that ability grouping within class may have detrimental effects on the self-image of a low achiever (Morgan, 1989, cited in Berghoff & Egawa, 1991). Supporting this claim, in a study conducted to help poor readers improve their reading ability, Donald Howard (1988) reports that low readers show little or no interest or enthusiasm for reading and he sites this as reason for their under achievement. Goodman (1987; cited in Bosh, 1989) agrees, "After years of being locked to basals and workbooks, poor readers can suffer from 'overkill'. They may think of reading as workbook pages that may make sense to somebody else, but not to them." (p. 221) Julie Bosh (1989) also concludes that we have a responsibility to prevent illiteracy and one way to do this is to help low readers gain positive attitudes toward reading. A study conducted by Diane Felmlee and Donna Eder (1983) found that placing students with higher ability peers influenced attitudes so that higher-grouped students gained more positive

attitudes than low-ability groups. So, the grouping seems to influence the standings in the class.

The most compelling evidence of ability-grouped low achievers comes from more qualitative studies. Many case studies have been conducted by parents of children that are labeled and placed in low reading groups which have led to the same depressing conclusions.

Jerry Phillips (1990), a high school teacher, whose daughter, Charlie, was immersed in a print enriched environment from birth through Kindergarten. She loved books. Yet he states, "elementary school closed the reading door for Charlie." (p. 5) In first grade Charlie was placed in the lowest reading group and she perceived herself as a deficient reader. Phillips says, "She had it in her head that she was not going to be a good reader." (p.5) This seemed to be the effect of her placement in the low group. She began developing a negative self image.

Another case with a similar outcome was written by Moira Juliebo and Jean Elliott (1984). It was on a child named Matthew who was a very bright and enthusiastic learner when he entered school. Then something happened. In first grade Matthew was labeled

and placed in the lowest reading group by a permanent substitute. Suddenly he developed a very negative attitude toward reading. Within a short time, formal schooling had helped him create a negative self-concept. No longer did he enjoy school. These case studies are evidence that grouping may lead to low self-esteem and poor attitudes toward reading in children that once had positive attitudes.

These examples show that heterogeneous grouping within class, either has no effect on a child's self-esteem and attitude, or it has a very negative effect. But what about low readers in an individualized reading program? Do they have a better attitude toward reading?

Individualized Instruction

The most noticeable aspect of research on individualized reading instruction is that studies are hard to find and few in number. As a matter of fact, many less studies have been done on this type of instructional mode than those done on ability grouping. Of the studies that can be found, most were either written in the 1960's or in the late 1980's and early 1990's. There seems to be a gap in the research. Yet most seem to be reporting very similar data. Namely

that there is a much more positive effect on attitudes and self-concepts of children in these types of individualized programs.

Research has shown over and over that pupils in an individualized reading program show positive attitudes toward reading (Bosh, 1982; Goldman, 1967; Gurney, 1966; Huser, 1967 cited in Sartain, 1968; Madden, 1988; Sartain, 1968; Thompson, 1956 cited in Sartain, 1968; Tunnell & Jacobs, 1989). This has proven true in comparative studies, intervention programs, and in individual case studies.

In comparative studies there was only one which conflicted with the majority of the data. It reported, when comparing children in a basal program and children in an individualized reading program, there was no significant difference in positive attitudes toward themselves as readers (Davis, 1973; Johnson, Belton, Macdonald, Sommerfield, & Phelps, 1963). Yet they did find that there were more positive parental and public reactions to the program.

In another comparative study of grouping versus literature-based individual instruction, Eldredge and Butterfield (1986, cited in Tunnell and Jacobs, 1989) found that teaching reading through literature had

positive effects on student's attitudes toward reading unlike the basals which they had previously read. This is more a reflection of the mainstream opinion based in research on individualized reading.

Adding to the literature of positive results are studies of intervention programs that have had success using individualized reading programs. Allen, Michalove, Shockley, & West, (1991) address the issue of reducing the risks of literacy learning, in an intervention case study of a very low reader named Lee. After introducing Lee to a whole language approach and individualized reading, his attitudes towards books changed. They reported that, "Lee began to seek out these familiar stories to read with friends" (p. 467) where before he would have never read to a class and would not have chosen to read during free time.

Another intervention program conducted in a second grade class by Goldman (1967) found that attitudes toward books at the beginning of the year were "very narrow and almost indifferent." (p. 11) Then these second graders were immersed into an individualized reading program and their attitudes changed. Among the things these children did, as evidence of their more productive attitude toward reading, was staying in

during lunch hour to go to the library for new books. In addition, they worked on activities with their books at home. When there was free time, they would rather read than color. Finally when the teacher would bring new books to class they would "run" to the books. Positive attitudes were obviously being fostered in this classroom. Reinforced by another intervention program, Juile Bosh (1989) stated that when this program was implemented it "provided the climate necessary to change reading attitudes and improve reading." (p. 222)

These changed attitudes do not just happen with remedial readers. Tunnell's study in 1986 (cited in Tunnell & Jacobs, 1989), using a literature-based program with an entire class, found that, what was truly impressive was the noteworthy swing in reading attitudes of all of the children, not just the stalled readers.

Moreover, elements of an individualized program not only seem to improve the self-image of a child, but also reduce the chances that he or she will have a negative attitude towards reading. Meeting in conferences, one-on-one, seems to increase the self-esteem of a child. In a presentation at the

International Reading Association Conference (Sartain, 1968), conferencing was mentioned as an advantage to individualized reading. They reported that conferencing eliminated the "danger of a child attaining an inadequate self-image as a result of constantly finding himself struggling at the bottom of a group." (p. 5) Also McDonald, Harris, and Mann's study in 1966 (cited in Sartain, 1968) found that conferences did result in better attitudes toward reading.

Although based on a limited amount of literature, an individualized reading program does seems to foster more positive attitudes toward reading. Accepting the fact that the research is limited, the goal of this study is to investigate this hypothesis and to add to the growing body of literature comparing children's attitudes in these two types of reading programs. By uncovering qualitative statements made by the children receiving instruction, true feeling about books, reading, and themselves, as readers, may be understood.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Description of Reading Instruction

The classrooms from which the subjects of this

study were taken were located in neighboring school systems in Central Virginia. There were certain basic characteristics and philosophies of the classrooms' reading instruction which led them to be structurally very different. These assumptions and characteristics were driving the structure of each of the classrooms and manifested themselves in the layout of each of the classrooms.

In Mrs. Zupko's class, the traditional basal reading program, the structure was suggested and driven by the basal series itself. It was a more traditional classroom where the students were brought together for reading instruction on similar reading levels. They were taught skills as a group, as suggested by the basal series. The basal reading program was based on the following characteristics summarized and outlined by Johnson, Belton, Macdonald, Sommerfield, & Phelps (1963): (1) All of the material being read is pre-selected by the publisher and contained in a basic series of books. (2) The instruction is delivered in groups, usually three, and held consistent over a period of time. (3) Each group reads out of a given level in the basal series and moves to the next when a sufficient amount of the current one is finished. (4)

Reading skills are primarily taught sequentially, as suggested by the basal reader. Apparent through observation, Mrs. Zupko's classroom seemed to have all four of these characteristics.

Mrs. Zupko's classroom physically looked like a traditional first grade class. The student's worked at tables and they each had a bag hooked to the back of their chair to hold their belongings. There were two teachers desks in the room, one for the regular teacher and one for the aide. There was a blackboard on one wall and a bulletin board on another. The children's work was displayed on the back wall which was a partition closing off another classroom used when the school was an open school. It was permanently closed now. There was one larger table that was used primarily for reading instruction. At the head of the table there was a larger chair for Mrs. Zupko. Underneath a bookshelf that held supplies located near the door, there was a smaller bookshelf holding trade books. It was designed to display the full cover of the books. There were approximately 20 books on this shelf and they seemed to be the only trade books in the room. There apparently was no designated area on the floor for "circle" or whole group instruction.

In Mrs. Smith's class, the individualized reading program, the structure was constructed by her to meet the unique needs of the children in her class. It was a more open-concept classroom where the reading instruction was personalized. In this situation the students were all reading independently on their own instructional level. Skills were not taught in a sequential order suggested by a series, but they were taught individually, as needed, and in the context of the material being read. This classroom was based on the following characteristics also summarized and outlined by Johnson, Belton, Macdonald, Sommerfield, & Phelps (1963): (1) In an individualized reading program the children's reading material is self-selected with the general guidance of the teacher. (2) The child reads progressing at his own pace with skills taught non-sequentially and in the context of the self selected material. (3) The teacher and the child conference one-to-one and any grouping, if needed, is flexible and focused on a specific task for specific students. Mrs. Smith's classroom also fits these characteristics.

Physically Mrs. Smith's classroom looked less like the traditional first grade. Similar to Mrs. Zupko's

class, it had was once been an open school, but it had permanent walls now. Yet it did not have a door, but an opening into a core where all the other first grade classrooms opened, also. All of the children sat at tables and had cubbies to hold their belongings. Also similar to Mrs. Zupko's room, this classroom had an aide. There was not a desk for the teacher in the room, it was in the open core. On one wall there was a blackboard and on all the other walls there were posters and work displayed that the children had done. There was an area up front that had a large rug used for group instruction. There was another identical rug in another corner of the room that was surrounded by many books on three different bookshelves designed to show the cover of the book and one regular bookshelf. There was also a couch in this area. There appeared to be no large table used specifically for reading instruction. From observation, the teacher was very flexible and a reading conference could be held almost anywhere.

Subjects

The subjects used in this study were ten six and seven year old students in March of their first grade year. Half were taken from the classroom that used a

basal reading program and the other half were taken from the individualized reading program class. All of the children had been with their respective teachers for the entire year. Each child was chosen with the guidance of the classroom teacher and with the help of an informal reading assessment. Each was considered a low reader by their respective teacher.

The first group of five were selected from Mrs. Zupko's lowest reading group. All of these children had been placed in this group by her at the beginning of the year. They all received extra instruction in reading, also. Every morning they moved as a group to a Chapter One teacher, who gave them group reading instruction aimed at remedial readers. All of them were also tutored by students from a local University twice a week for approximately 45 minutes. There were three females and two males in the sample. Three of the children were African-American and two were Caucasian.

The second group of five students was selected from Mrs. Smith's class. Since they were not placed in reading groups, the children were tested using the same informal reading inventory given to the subjects in the other class. With the guidance of Mrs. Smith and the

results of the inventory, five of the lowest readers were selected to take part in the test. Two of the children selected attended the same type of Chapter One instruction as the children in Mrs. Zupko's class did. Also, periodically throughout the week, different volunteers ranging from parents, high school students, University students, and upper elementary students, all came to work with the students in the class. So each of the subjects received periodic, yet random tutoring. There were three males taken out of this class and two females. Two of the children were African-American and three were Caucasian.

Method

The informal reading inventory used to test the children was taken from the McGuffey Reading Center at the University of Virginia. It was a test for emergent readers. The sections included testing for letter naming, production of letters, phonemic awareness, and concept of word.

The measure used to assess the children's attitudes was a survey and interview about attitudes containing three sections. The first section involved a survey, the second was a self-ranking of the child based on how he or she perceived their respective

teacher perceived their reading, and the third section was open ended questions.

Each child involved in the study was interviewed one-on-one. Before the interview, they were told that they had been chosen to participate because their attitudes and opinions about reading were valued. This was done to relieve any anxiety the children might have felt with the interviewer or with the situation itself. The subjects were also told that anything they said would be held in strict confidentiality. To insure this, each child was asked to choose a different name to be used as a reference in the study. These names will be referred to when quoting the children in the discussion of the results. Throughout all of the interview, all of the student's responses were tape-recorded for transcription purposes. The subjects were aware that the taping was occurring from the beginning of the interview. Once they understood what was going on, the interview was begun.

Section One

The first section involved a survey of elementary reading attitudes printed in The Reading Teacher in May of 1990 (see Appendix A). There were twenty questions on the survey. The first ten questions related to

recreational reading and the last ten related to academic reading. Included in the survey were four pictures of the cartoon character Garfield ranging from a very happy or excited face to a very mad or angry face (see Appendix B). These pictures were enlarged and pasted on a piece of construction paper so they could be more easily seen by the children.

The Garfield scale was introduced and explained to each child first. They were then asked to voice their opinion as to how they thought Garfield felt in each of the four pictures. This allowed them to vocalize their thoughts and allowed the interviewee to know that the children understood the feelings that would be expressed in each of the four pictures. Once this had been done, examples were given to make sure the child understood the scale. For example, they might be asked how they felt about ice cream. They were then told to point to the Garfield that expressed the same feeling that they felt about ice cream. Never were they asked only to point to the Garfield that best expressed their feelings or to not vocalize. Many times they were asked to expand upon their answers and other questions were asked to clarify responses. The order of questions was not necessarily rigid yet all of them

were asked. (After conducting the interview, some questions had to be omitted from the study because they were confusing to the students or they were not relevant in first grade. These are noted in Appendix A.)

In order to facilitate analysis of the data, a number value was given to each of the four Garfield pictures. The most excited received a response of one, and then in increments of one, each remaining picture received a higher number. These were not used for any purpose other than identification. Averages were not taken. Responses of one or two were recorded as positive. Responses of three and four were recorded as negative. For each of the questions, positive and negative answers will be tallied and compared. They will be broken down and compared in terms of recreational reading and academic reading among the two classes. The findings will then be discussed.

Section Two

The second part of the interview was a single question assessing how each child felt their teacher viewed themselves as readers. Attached to a piece of paper, there were five circles of the same size. All of the circles were blue, yet they varied in shade from

very light to very dark (see Appendix C). This was used as the scale on which the children rated themselves.

First the circles were introduced. Each child was told that, together, we were going to play a game and to pretend that the circles were chips or balls that their teacher had. They were then told a story similar to this:

> Here are five chips that your teacher is going to give to students in your class. She is going to give this one (the darkest one) to someone in the class that she thinks is a very good reader. And she is going to give this one (the lightest chip) to someone that she thinks needs a lot of help in reading or who she thinks is not a very good reader. She will give all of the ones in between to the rest of the students in her class. Which one do you think she would give you?

Their response was recorded and they were asked to expand upon their answer. The overall responses to this question were tallied and compared between the two classes. These findings are discussed along with any comments made by the subject during this section.

Section Three

The third section of the interview contained four open-ended questions (see Appendix D). Some of these questions were similar to the ones found in the first section, yet at this point the children did not have pictures or a scale to rely on. They were asked to put their feelings in their own words.

All four of the questions were asked of each child, yet not necessarily in the same order. They were used as a guideline. Similarly to the other two sections, the responses from the open ended questions were compared between the two groups.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Attitudes during Recreational Reading

For both the individualized reading group and the basal reading group, the results of items related to reading during free time,

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Insert Table 1 about here

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were very positive. In general, all students seemed to like reading during free time regardless of the instructional mode.

Similarly, the responses for reading at home for fun were approximately the same for both classes. All responses were positive for the individualized class and four of the five were positive for the basal class. Most of the children enjoyed this type of recreational reading. Reasons for these positive attitudes may include little or no pressure to read well at home and little or no competition from peers. At home these students have no group in which to read, thus relieving some anxiety about making errors in front of others. In addition, the more positive attitudes could also be influenced by the fact that at home these children are allowed to choose their own books and most likely they choose books that they enjoy reading. Finally, a child's home life would be another influential factor that would be yet another dimension to explore and one not tested by this study.

When the children were asked about reading during free time at school, attitudes for the basal reading group seemed to shift in the negative direction. Mrs. Smith's remedial readers, using individualized instruction, had very positive responses, while Mrs. Zupko's class, using the basal series, had more negative responses. Ariel, a student in the

individualized reading program responded with the feeling of "happy" when asked about reading a book in school during free time. While responses such as "mad" and "sad" were received from Cindy and Fred, members of Mrs. Zupko's class, respectfully. It seems the distinction of school or the association of school with reading using a basal program seems to negatively affect student's attitudes toward recreational reading.

Similarly, reading during the summer was a more popular activity for children in the individualized reading program. As compared to Mrs. Zupko's class, when asked how they felt about reading during the summer, the children responded with statements of feeling "sad". Cindy, when asked the question of, "Do you like it [reading]?", answered "no". Their attitude toward reading in the summer was similar to their attitude toward reading during free time in school. They did not seem to enjoy choosing to read in these two situations.

Many children in general think of summer as a non-academic time, time to play and to choose things to do that they think are fun. If attitudes are negative, then reading is probably not one of the choices the children in the basal reading classroom make. Perhaps

the reason for these negative attitudes in the basal reading program is because reading is primarily thought of as an academic task, since it is primarily done in reading groups lead by the teacher. It seems little independent reading was occurring in the classroom and when it was occurring it was an option, along with many others, and seemed not to be chosen very often. On the other hand, in the individualized reading classroom, reading attitudes were more positive toward reading during the summer and from the structure of the classroom it seems to be less directly related to a primarily academic task. Reading is very flexible. This is a possible reason why they might choose to read in the summer more often than the children in the basal classroom. They see it as a fun activity.

Other reasons for this distinction between free reading in general or at home and free reading at school or during the summer could be based on the structure and philosophy of the reading program in each of the classrooms. Individualized reading instruction teaches children to be independent readers and to choose their own books, independently with the guidance of the teacher. It also teaches them to choose books that are developmentally appropriate. Children learn

to read independently in this setting and they learn to seek help from a peer if needed.

Secondly, the number of books available in a room could affect the attitude a child has toward reading in that classroom. From my observations, not only were there many books available in the individualized reading program, but there were a wide variety of books at a wide range of developmental levels. In contrast, in Mrs. Zupko's room, there were few trade books for any of her students to choose from and by far the low readers were the most disadvantaged because there seemed to be few trade books on their instructional level. Many of the books seemed to be for early readers not emergent readers, except for the basal reading series. Therefore the children in the individualized reading program may have more positive attitudes toward choosing appropriate books in free time and during the summer because of the practice they receive in choosing books at school and the variety of books from which to choose.

When asked about reading instead of playing, opposite results were found from the stated hypothesis. The children in the basal class felt positive about reading instead of playing while the children in Mrs.

Smith's class felt more negative. A reason for these results may be that the children in the basal program are not given as much time to read during the day as they would like. Yet these results do not seem to make sense when compared to the earlier results of attitudes during free time. It maybe that this question was misleading or confusing for a first grader. The question read, "How do you feel about reading instead of playing?" So the children had to understand that a choice had already been made to read instead of play and then they had to assess how they felt about the choice. This involves higher order of thinking. Supporting this conclusion is the fact that, while conducting the interview, this question was repeated and or rephrased to many of the children. Most likely, it was not phrased in the simplest form for a first grader to understand.

In terms of starting new books, both classes had mixed responses. Some seemed to like to start new books, while others found it frustrating. Possible reasons for these mixed results could be the fact that remedial readers are reluctant to begin reading new material. Many times they feel the books they start are going to be too hard. Shelly in Mrs. Smith's

individualized class comments on starting a new book, "sometimes. . . um. . . . it's just like really hard." When asked why it was hard, she said there were "big, long words." Also Taylor said, "I don't want to start a new book" when asked why he felt negatively toward this question. Mrs. Zupko's student Fred, in the basal class, felt "sad" about starting new books. These remarks are grounds to conclude that new books are hard for all remedial readers because of the low level of reading on which they are functioning and seems to justify their hesitation to want to start new books.

Most students in both groups felt very positive about receiving a book for a present and about going to a bookstore. Cindy, in Mrs. Zupko's class, and Ariel, in Mrs. Smith's class, felt "happy" about both situations. In addition, both classes enjoyed reading varying types of books. So it seems placing numerous books of different types in a classroom would be looked upon very favorably by the students and could also entice them to read thus promoting positive attitudes toward books.

Attitudes during Academic Reading

When the children were asked how they felt about reading in school,

Insert Table 2 about here

all but one in the individualized program answered positively. Shelly, a student in this class, commented, "I like to learn new books." Taylor said, "I like to read." When asked why, he responded, "I get to read a book that I never read." Similarly, when asked how they felt when it was time for their reading workshop, all but one answered positively. Ariel felt "happy" when it was time to start. The overall consensus of attitude toward the individualized reading program was very positive. In both of these cases, when asked about the stories that are read, the only negative responses came from the same child. This child also has been labeled with the Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and was on ritilin.

In comparison, of the children in the basal program, three of the children had positive attitudes toward reading in school in general. It is possible that in the basal room, these three children were comfortable with the mode of instruction their classroom teacher has chosen. In addition, these children might have felt positive because of the extra

instruction they were receiving from the tutors that met with them twice a week. This could influence the way they felt about reading, since they would be receiving personalized attention, yet all the children in this class also had their own tutors.

Only two had positive attitudes when it was time to start reading group. The majority had negative attitudes. Negative comments made by students in the reading groups seems to stand out. Cindy said that she does not like it "'cause we have to get up and read the chart.", which is placed in the front of the group. Fred felt "sad" when it was time for group instruction. Stephanie said that other children were mean to her while she read and that made her "sad". It seems that the majority of the negative comments were related to the fact that they were having to perform in public. Reading in front of a group of peers seemed to be a very unpopular thing to do for these remedial readers. This proved to be true when they were asked how they felt about reading aloud to the group, also.

Two of the students in the basal program had negative responses when asked how they felt about reading out loud. Cindy said that it made her feel bad "'cause I'm going to have to move my balloon". Moving

her balloon was part of a discipline system set up in the classroom. It appeared to be used strictly for behavior, yet from this comment that could be questioned. Cindy also says she feels "sad" when she has to read out loud and "sad" when she is wrong. Stephanie said that her friends make "sad faces" when she reads out loud and that "every time I read they [her friends] get mad." Both of these comments suggest a poor impression of oral reading in front of peers with possible punishment or sanction on the part of these students.

In contrast, no one in the individualized reading program made negative responses to reading out loud. Once again this is a reflection of the fact that they are not reading in front of other children but in a one-on-one conference with the teacher. They are not comparing their reading with anyone else because they only hear their own. They seem less apprehensive about oral reading in general, unless it was to the whole group. Then Taylor had some reservations. He said that if he had to read to the whole class he would be "real scared" because "everybody has to listen to you and you might mess up." When asked what the other children might do that would scare him, he said, "They

might laugh." and "They might say he don't know how to read." Similar to the responses of reading out loud in a basal group, oral reading in front of a group, even for readers in an individualized reading program, makes remedial readers nervous and uneasy.

When the children were asked how they felt when they were asked questions about what they read, most of the answers from both of the classes were positive. This does not seem surprising in the individualized reading program because the majority of the time they were asked questions about what they read, it was during their conference with the classroom teacher. In this situation there would be no peer pressure involved if a question were answered incorrectly and all of the students were receiving individual attention from the teacher. While in the basal classroom, the members of the group are sharing the attention and forced to answer in front of others. For many this situation might produce anxiety similar to the anxiety felt while reading out loud. Yet also for some it might function as a time to receive attention, yet from comments it seems to be negative attention. One student in the grouped situation expressed the desire not to be asked questions in the group. Michael said that she asked

hard questions and that "makes me mad." None of the students in Mrs. Smith's class had comments similar to this.

When asked about how they felt about the stories they read during their reading instruction, most seem to like them in both situations. All students in the individualized program enjoyed it and only one did not enjoy it in the basal reading program. Michael's reason for not liking the stories he read was because "they are boring and they are so long". This is not surprising in the basal reading program, since they are reading the given story in the book while in the individualized reading program children are choosing their own books to suit their own needs and tastes. Yet credit must be given to the company responsible for choosing the stories that make up the basal, since many of the children liked the ones they chose. Yet once again, it could have been a case of not knowing any other stories except the familiar ones in the basal, since the classroom lacked a large number of other books.

Finally, when asked if they had ever learned anything from a book, many of the children in both classes said yes. When asked how they felt about that,

most felt very positive. They seemed to like learning from a book. This would support the use of trade books in a classroom since the children felt good learning this way.

Summary

Overall, in both the dimensions of recreational reading and academic reading, the children in the individualized reading class had more positive attitudes

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Insert Figure 1 about here

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than the basal group. Although both groups' negative attitudes were higher on the recreational items. Once again, reasons for this may include the fact that, in general, low readers find reading hard and thus do not seek to read during recreational times.

General Conclusions from Open Ended Questions

Basal Reading Instruction

In general, the comments received from the open-ended questions of the basal reading group of children were answered in similar ways. It was almost as if they were giving a programmed responses to the questions which they felt was appropriate. They did

not appear to critically think about themselves as readers, as they had appeared to do in the survey section.

When asked where they thought their teacher would rank them in the class in terms of reading, they all ranked themselves at the very top of the class. When they were asked how they felt they did in reading, typical responses were "good". When asked if they did good in reading they responded "yes" and that they felt "happy" about their reading. Only one child said that she was a middle reader, yet contradicting herself, she ranked herself at the top of the class in terms of how well her teacher thought she did in reading. Up to this point they all seem to be agreeing.

Then when they responded to the question of how others perceived their reading, responses are varied. They included statements such as, "They like it", they feel "happy", and they think it is "good." One child felt that others did not think her reading was good, yet it reflected her desire to not read to her peers. Her response was that "every time I read they get mad." She said that her friends were "sad" when she reads and that they made "sad faces."

This statement of perceiving that others do not

like her reading is similar to statements made by other children in this class related to reading out loud in the first section. Both Cindy and Stephanie did not like reading out loud and they both expressed anxiety about peer pressure associated with this situation. It seems in this situation these children were reflective of the question and of the situation, yet in terms of perceiving themselves as readers and ranking themselves in the class, they were not. There seems to be a contradiction here. It is obvious that they are aware at some level of their reading and of their mistakes in reading in a public situation, yet they do not reflect this in their self-ranking or in how other's perceive their reading.

In addition, when asked how they could become a better reader, responses were varied. Michael said that "looking at the words" and "keeping your eyes open" would help you become a better reader. Francie responded with the answer "books." And Stephanie thought that "a good teacher" was the way to become a better reader.

These contradictions and responses reflect the structure and philosophy of the classroom. In a teacher and basal driven system of reading instruction,

where the children have little say in which books they read, it is not surprising that a child thinks that a teacher is necessary to become a better reader. The children are used to a teacher-directed, structured reading group with little flexibility. They are also used to a tangible reward system, including rewards for good reading, evident in comments made by Francie and observation of Michael in Mrs. Zupko's room. Francie said that she knew she was a good reader because she earned marbles for the class when she reads well. Also, while observing in the classroom, Michael was reading a book to Mrs. Zupko that he had learned to read with his tutor. After he finished reading the book, Mrs. Zupko told him that he had read the book very well and she told him to go get a marble and put it in the jar, that since he had worked so hard and read the book so well he had earned a marble for the entire class.

This system of rewards seemed to contribute to the quick and almost recited answers received from these children. Evident from these responses, it seemed in a sense that the teacher was conditioning them to believe they were good readers through tangible rewards. It seemed when Mrs. Zupko gives tangible items for better

performance, the children are interpreting this to mean that she thinks they are "good" readers in the class. In a way, they are learning to not think about their own reading but to rely on their teachers tangible reward to tell them how they have done.

In addition, in terms of reading instruction in this class, there seemed to be less decision-making by the students in the basal group, and thus possibly less independent thinking going on. Since the children are just given the reading material and not asked to choose it, less thought is going into the material that is read and why it was appropriate for them to read. Once again this could contribute to the quick and seemingly thoughtless comments about themselves as readers.

Individualized Reading Instruction

Evidenced by the responses in Mrs. Smith's class, and by the pauses to think about answers, the students seemed more reflective and more critical of themselves as readers in general. Not everyone ranked themselves at the top of the class. As a matter of fact, one ranked himself at the lowest, two in the middle, and two at the top. When asked how they do in reading, comments ranged from Ariel's "good" to Josh's "pretty well." Shelly said that she did "sort-of ok" and when

asked why she ranked herself in the middle of the class, she said "because. . .um. . .I can't. . . um. . . I need a little more practice in reading." Finally Leonardo said that he did not read "very well."

The same pattern held true when they were asked how other people perceived their reading. Shelly said that they thought it was "ok." Ariel said, "I don't know. . . happy." Leonardo said that others felt "worse" about his reading. So the pattern of responses varied and seemed not to be such quick and simple answers.

Finally when asked how they could become better readers, comments made were "practice" by Leonardo and "by reading more books" by Shelly. Not a surprising answer in a class that stresses variety of books and independent reading.

All of these responses from the individualized class show readers that are reflecting on themselves as readers. With the exception of Leonardo, the child with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, all of the other children had very positive attitudes toward reading in both dimensions. They seemed more able to evaluate themselves, and know that they needed more help. They seemed to think about the questions and not

answer the way they thought would be appropriate. They felt good about reading. They just did not think that they were the best readers in the class and they could express this difference.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study seem to support both the research that has been done in the field of ability grouping for instruction versus individualized instruction and the hypothesis stated at the beginning of the study. Children in an individualized reading program do seem to have more positive attitudes toward reading.

Summarizing the educational research on grouping within class for instruction, it has been found that this type of grouping has either no effect on a child's self-image and attitude, or it has a very negative effect. In terms of individualized instruction the research concludes that this type of program seems to foster more positive attitudes toward reading. As hypothesized, remedial readers in these two settings did have different attitudes toward reading. Overall the children in the individualized reading program had more positive attitudes toward reading as compared with

the basal reading group, yet there were some areas where the emphasis was felt more strongly.

Items related to recreational reading for both classes received more negative responses than items related to academic reading, yet still the basal program had more negative responses. Although both classes seemed to like reading during free time in general and at home, the majority of the children in the basal class did not enjoy reading during free time at school nor did they like reading during the summer. Neither class particularly enjoyed, nor disliked, starting new books. The results seemed to be mixed, yet both classes enjoyed going to a bookstore, receiving a book for a present, and reading a variety of books.

In terms of academic reading, the differences between the two classes were just as noticeable. All but one of the children in the individualized reading program liked reading in school, reading workshop, and the stories they were reading. While in comparison, the basal group was much more negative. They did not seem to like their reading group, except for the stories read in the basal. No one was bothered by reading out loud in the individualized class, while

many expressed anxiety and embarrassment of oral reading in the basal program. When they were asked questions about what they read, only one child in the individualized class minded, yet some did mind in the basal group. Finally, all children, no matter which class, felt positive about learning information from books.

All the basal children in general thought their teacher perceived them as good readers. They also saw themselves as good readers or said so, even though their attitudes were not very positive. The children in the individualized program had varied responses as to how they thought their teacher perceived them as readers, yet most of these children had positive attitudes toward reading. Why is it the case that the children in the individualized program would say that they were not great readers yet have positive attitudes toward reading, while the children in the basal reading program said that they are great readers and have more negative attitudes toward reading?

The answer seems to be embedded in the structure of the reading instruction and the atmosphere of the classroom. Children in the individualized program are not constantly comparing themselves to members of

higher reading groups like the children in the basal group. Never in the individualized program is a child asked to read in front of a group of students, risking being embarrassed by his or her oral reading. Children in the individualized reading program are only compared to their previous work, not to the work that other members of the group are producing. In addition, the children are self-selecting the developmentally appropriate material which they are reading, with the help of the teacher, and thus they are more interested in it and more likely to be motivated to read the material. Finally, each child is developing a close working relationship with the teacher reinforced through the conferences they have each week. This may promote the higher self-esteem and positive attitudes seen in these children.

Interesting to note, upon analysis of the data, there appeared a trend in responses which seemed significant, yet was not part of the study. There was a boy in each of the samples that had been diagnosed with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and both of the boys were taking the medication ritilin to help this situation. Of the negative responses that were tallied just of these two boys, the one in the basal

reading class gave 10 of the 23 negative responses, 43% of the total. While the boy in the individualized class gave 4 of the 11 negative responses, 36% of the total, and all three of the negative responses that were related to academic reading. If he were not a participant of the study, all of the responses related to academic reading in the individualized classroom would have been positive. This seems like a very influential dimension of the study and one which needs more investigation.

Another dimension that would be interesting to investigate, would be the attitudes that the other children in the classes have toward reading. Do their attitudes change as a result of ability? Are the attitudes of higher achieving students more similar in the two groups or do they follow the same pattern? How do the higher achieving students view themselves as readers? All of these are questions that need further investigation.

Although the sample size is fairly small and there were time constraints to deal with, the conclusions from this study seem to support an individualized reading program as a way to develop positive attitudes of remedial readers. It seems if we are going to

produce better readers in this country we need to learn to create an atmosphere that fosters independent reading and positive attitudes. Along with these positive attitudes, we need to help children grow to love and appreciate reading and books as entertainment as well as a way to learn about the world. Striving for this goal of positive attitudes toward reading for all readers, not just remedial readers, must become part of the reading curriculum and part of the mode of reading instruction in all schools. This will also, in turn, change the structure of the classrooms where the instruction is taking place. Only then will our schools produce more children that like to read and succeed at reading.

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Appendix A

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

*1. How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?

2. How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?

3. How do you feel about reading for fun at home?

4. How do you feel about getting a book for a present?

5. How do you feel about spending free time reading?

6. How do you feel about starting a new book?

7. How do you feel about reading during the summer?

8. How do you feel about reading instead of playing?

9. How do you feel about going to a bookstore?

10. How do you feel about reading different types of books?

11. How do you feel when the teacher asks you questions about what you read?

*12. How do you feel about reading workbook pages and worksheets?

13. How do you feel about reading in school?

*14. How do you feel about reading you school books?

15. How do you feel about learning from a book?

16. How do you feel when it's time for reading group/workshop?

17. How do you feel about the stories you read in reading group/workshop?

18. How do you feel when you read out loud in class?

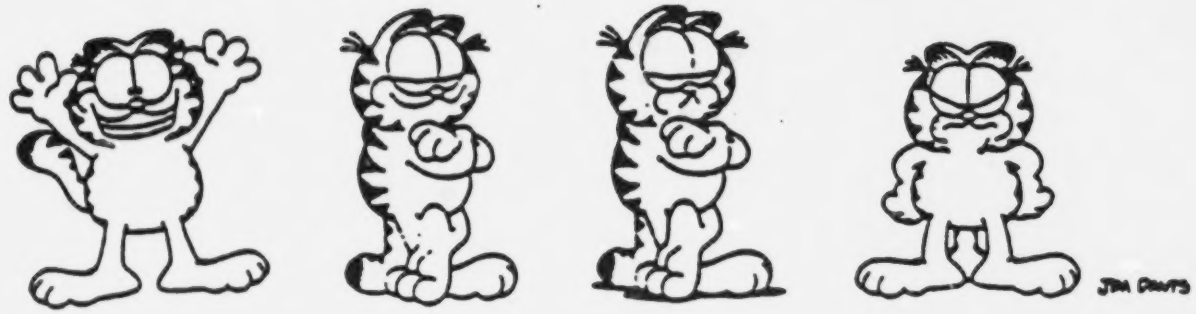
*19. How do you feel about using a dictionary?

*20. How do you feel about taking a reading test?

* Omitted questions

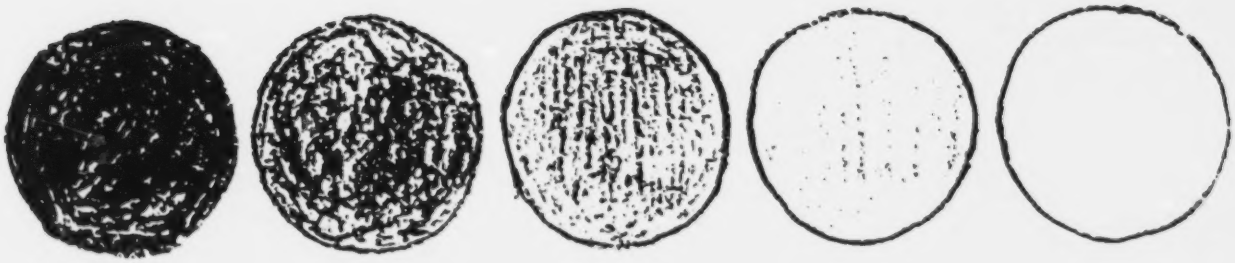
Appendix B

Garfield Attitude Measurement Scale



Appendix C

Teacher's Perception of Student as Reader: A Self-Ranking Scale



Appendix D

Open-Ended Questions

1. How do you think you do in reading? Are you a good reader?
2. What is your favorite part about reading?
3. How do you think other people feel about you reading?
4. What could help you become a better reader?

Table 1

Negative Reading Attitudes During Various Recreational Times

	Basal reading instruction	Individualized reading instruction
Free time for fun	1	1
Home	1	0
Free time in school	3	0
Summer	3	1
Instead of playing	1	4
Starting a new book	2	2
Receiving a book	1	0
Going to a bookstore	1	0
Varying types of books	1	0

Table 2

Negative Reading Attitudes Toward Various Academic Situations

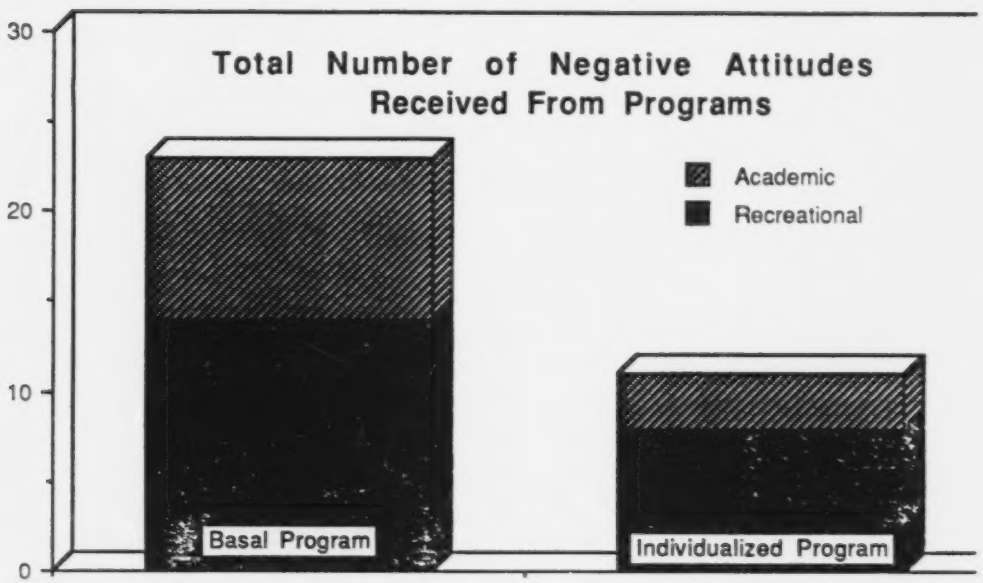
	Basal reading instruction	Individualized reading instruction
At school	2	1
During reading instruction	3	1
Out loud	2	0
When asked questions	1	0
Stories they read	1	1
Learning from a book	0	0

* All negative responses recorded in the individualized reading program were received from a child that is labeled with the Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.

Figure Captions

Figure 1. Total number of negative responses received from both the individualized reading class and the basal reading class

Figure 1



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